

DENOMINATIONS COMPARISON



ORTHODOX CHURCH

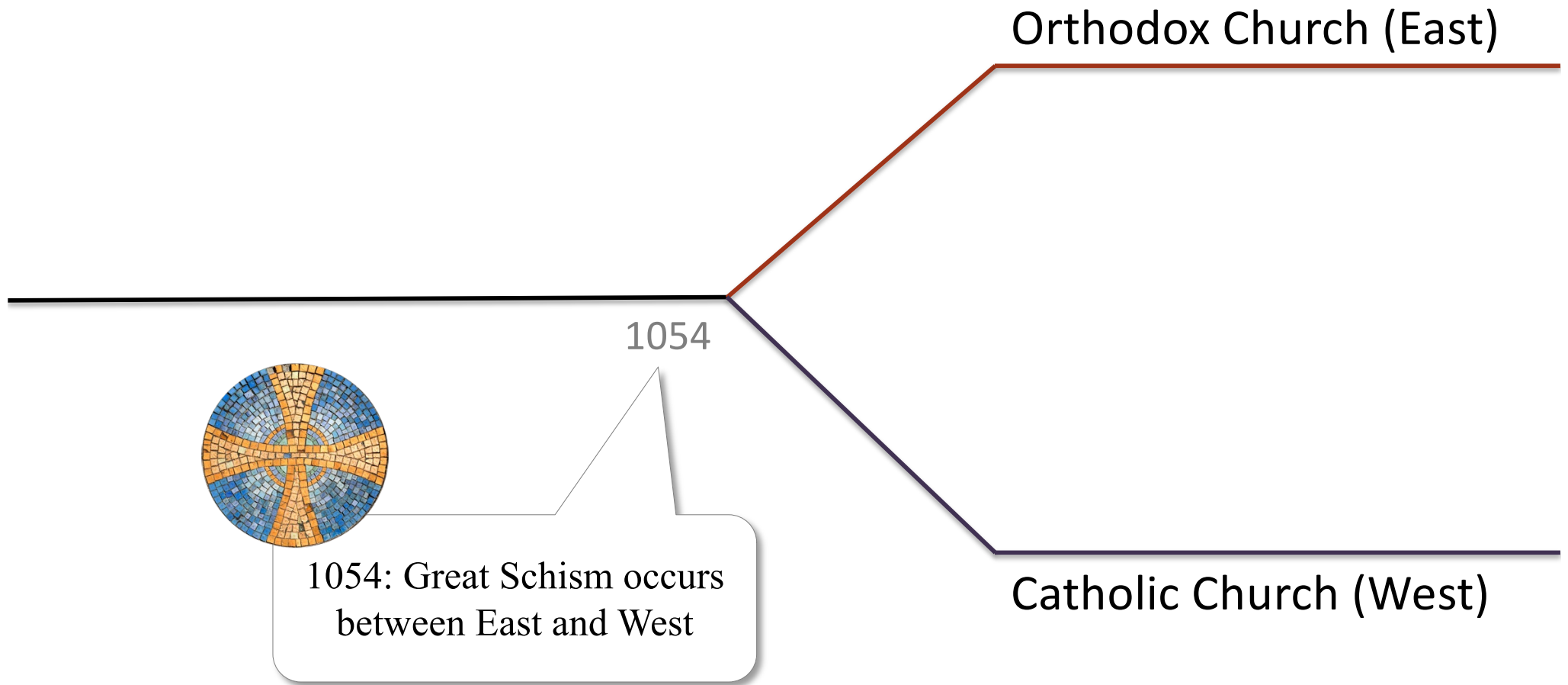
Menu

Founded

- AD 330: Emperor Constantine renamed the city of Byzantium “Constantinople.”
- Constantinople became the city of the leading patriarch in the Great Schism of AD 1054.



Emperor Constantine with
Church Fathers and the
Nicene Creed



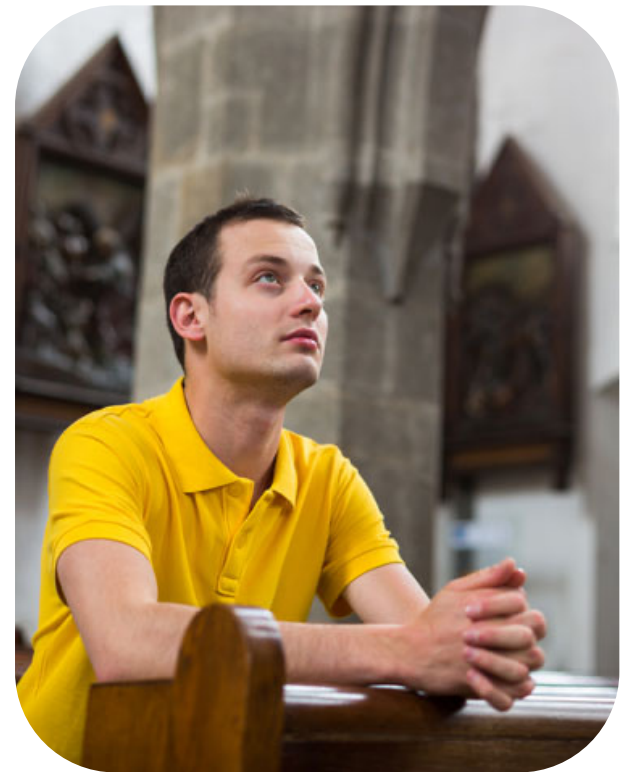
Key Term

ORTHODOX

- (1) *Lowercased.* Adhering to the essentials of the Christian faith, especially as articulated in the early creeds; in this sense the “orthodox” include conservative Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox.
- (2) *Capitalized.* Having to do with the association of church bodies of Eastern Europe and the Middle East that became divided from Rome and the churches aligned with it in Western Europe in the Great Schism of 1054.

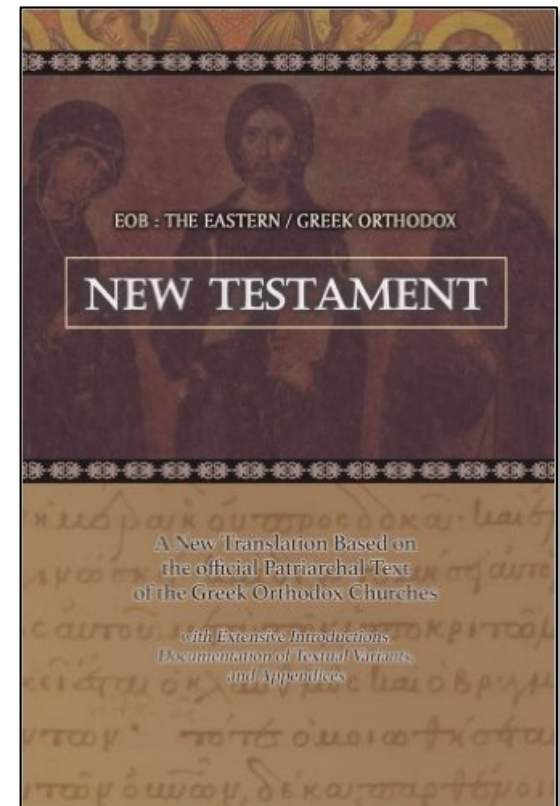
Adherents

- 260 million worldwide
- 1 million USA



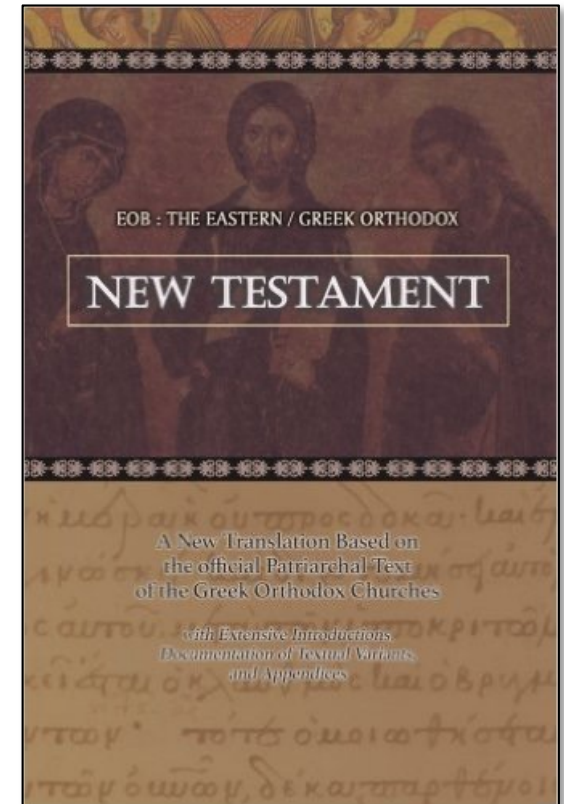
Scripture

- The Scriptures are without error in matters of faith only.
- Scripture is to be interpreted by Sacred Tradition, especially the seven Ecumenical Councils which met from AD 325–787.



Scripture

- The **canon** includes:
 - The 49 Old Testament books (the Catholic Bible plus three more).
 - The 27 New Testament books.



Key Term

CANON

- Canon refers to the authoritative list of books belonging in the Bible (or in the Old or New Testament).

God

- The one Creator and Lord of all, existing eternally as the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

Jesus

- Eternal Son incarnate
- Fully God and fully man
- Conceived and born of the Virgin Mary
- Died on the Cross for our sins
- Rose bodily from the grave
- Ascended into heaven
- Will come again in glory to judge us all



Salvation

- In Christ, God became human so that human beings might be deified (*theosis*), that is, have the energy of God's life in them.
- Through baptism and participation in the church, God's people receive the benefits of Christ's redeeming work as they persevere.



After Death

- At death, the souls of the faithful are purified as needed (a process of growth, not punishment), then get a foretaste of eternal blessing in heaven.
- The souls of the wicked get a foretaste of eternal torment in hell.

The Church

- The church is the Body of Christ in unbroken historical connection to the apostles, changelessly maintaining the faith of the undivided church as expressed in the creeds.



The Church

- It is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.
- Churches organized nationally: Armenian, Greek, Russian, and so forth.



The Church

- Its bishops under the leadership of **patriarchs** (the pope being recognized as one of several), of which that of Constantinople has primacy of honor.

Key Term

Patriarch

In the Orthodox Churches, the bishop recognized as the leader of all Orthodox bishops under his jurisdiction (usually a nation or ethnic group, such as Greeks, Armenians, or Russians).

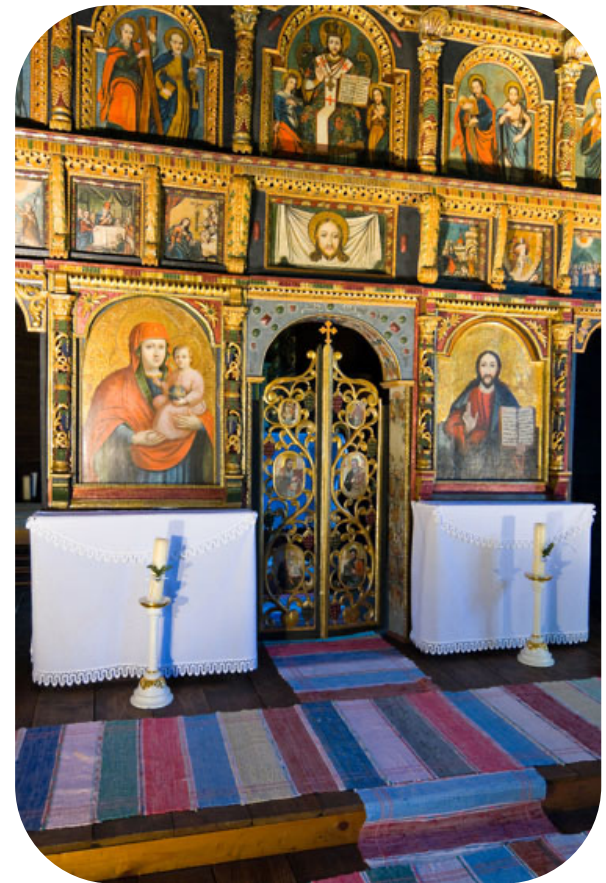
Sacraments

- Baptism initiates God's life in the one baptized (usually infants).
- In the Eucharist, bread and wine are changed into Jesus' body and blood (a Mystery to be left unexplained).



Other Beliefs and Practices

- Icons (images of Christ, Mary, or the saints) are objects of veneration through which God is to be worshiped.
- Mary conceived Jesus virginally. She remained a virgin perpetually, and (in tradition, not dogma) was assumed bodily into heaven.



Divisions and Trends

- A significant proportion are doctrinally conservative.
- Most Orthodox bodies are members of the World Council of Churches, whose liberal leanings have long caused concern.



LUTHERAN CHURCHES

Menu

Founded

- 1517: Martin Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses* (challenges to Catholic teaching) usually marks the beginning of the **Protestant Reformation**.



Martin Luther

Orthodox Church

Catholic Church

1517



1517: Protestant Reformation begins with Martin Luther

Lutheran Church

1885: Evangelical Covenant 1950: Evangelical Free

Key Term

PROTESTANT REFORMATION

- Movement originally calling for reform of the doctrines, preaching, and rites of the Catholic Church, ignited by the work of Martin Luther, and which resulted in the secession of many churches from the Catholic Church.
- All of the church bodies profiled in this presentation are Protestant except for the Catholic and Orthodox churches (although the Anglican Church also regards itself as Catholic).

Founded

- 1530: The Augsburg **Confession** is the first formal Lutheran statement of faith.

Key Term

CONFESSION

- A document stating what a particular church body or other group of Christians believe in common
- Examples: Augsburg Confession (Lutheran)
Westminster Confession of Faith
(Presbyterian)

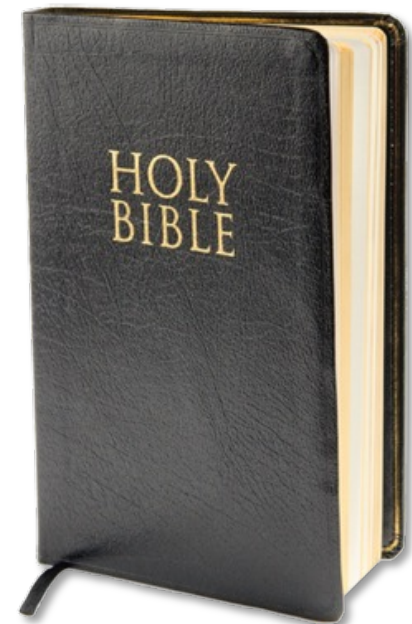
Adherents

- 80 million worldwide
- 6–7 million USA



Scripture

- Scripture alone is the authoritative witness to the gospel (some parts more directly or fully than others).
- The standard Protestant canon of 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books is accepted.
- Conservatives view Scripture as **inerrant**.



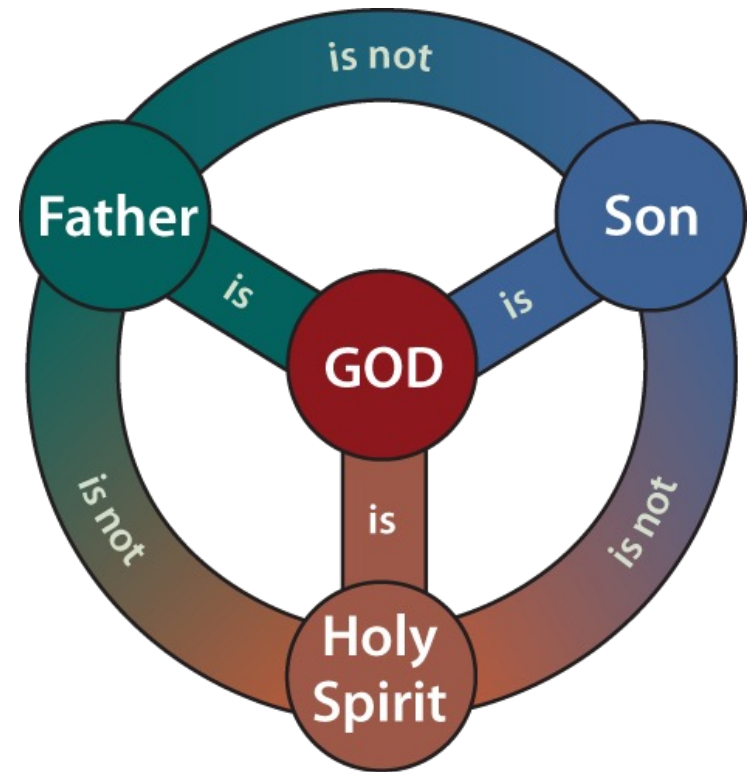
Key Term

INERRANT

- Meaning, “without error.”
- Used by evangelicals with reference to the complete trustworthiness of the Bible in all matters on which it speaks.

God

- The one Creator and Lord of all, existing eternally as the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).



Jesus

- The eternal Son incarnate
- Fully God and fully man
- Conceived and born of the Virgin Mary
- Died on the cross for our sins
- Rose bodily from the grave
- Ascended into heaven
- Will come again in glory to judge us all

Salvation

- We are saved by grace alone when God imputes to us his gift of righteousness through faith alone (*sola fide*) in Christ, who died for our sins.
- Good works are the inevitable result of true faith, but in no way the basis of our right standing before God.



After Death

- The souls of believers upon dying go immediately to be with Christ, and at Christ's return, their bodies are raised to immortal, eternal life.
- The souls of the wicked begin suffering immediately in hell.

The Church

- The church is the congregation of believers (though mixed with the lost) in which the gospel is taught and the sacraments rightly administered.
- All believers are “priests” in that they have direct access to God.



The Church

- All ministers are pastors; some serve as bishops.
- Historically, **apostolic succession** has been rejected.



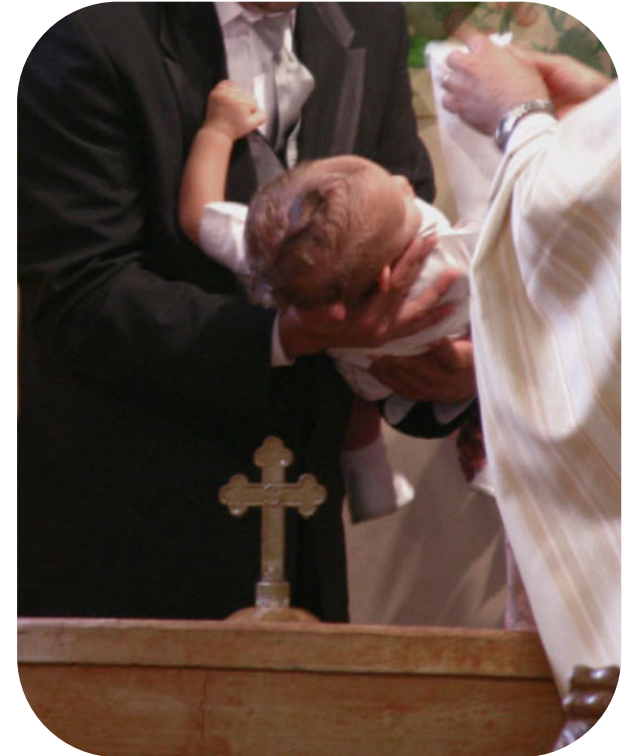
Key Term

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

- The doctrine that there is an unbroken line of succession from the original apostles of Jesus Christ to bishops of today.
- Only bishops in proper succession may ordain priests authorized to perform the sacraments.

Sacraments

- Baptism is necessary for salvation; in it both adults and infants are given God's grace.
- The Lord's Supper remains truly bread and wine but also becomes truly Jesus' body and blood (consubstantiation).



Other Beliefs and Practices

- The church's liturgy is similar to the Episcopal.
- Conservative Lutherans generally affirm that God chooses who will be saved before they believe.



Other Beliefs and Practices

- In 2009 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) opened the ministry to gay and lesbian pastors in committed relationships.



LUTHERAN CHURCHES

Divisions and Trends

- The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is doctrinally conservative.
- In 1999 the ELCA approved full communion with the Episcopal Church. The ELCA is the **mainline** church.



Lutheran Church-
Missouri Synod



Key Term

MAINLINE

- A Protestant denomination generally originating before 1900 (though it may have undergone recent mergers), from which theologically conservative congregations have separated (for example, the United Methodist Church).

ANGLICAN CHURCHES

Menu

ANGLICAN CHURCHES

Founded

- 1534: King Henry VIII was declared head of the Church of England.
- 1549: Thomas Cranmer produced the first *Book of Common Prayer*.



King Henry VIII



Book of Common Prayer

Orthodox Church

Catholic Church

1534: King Henry VIII declared head of the Church of England (Anglican)



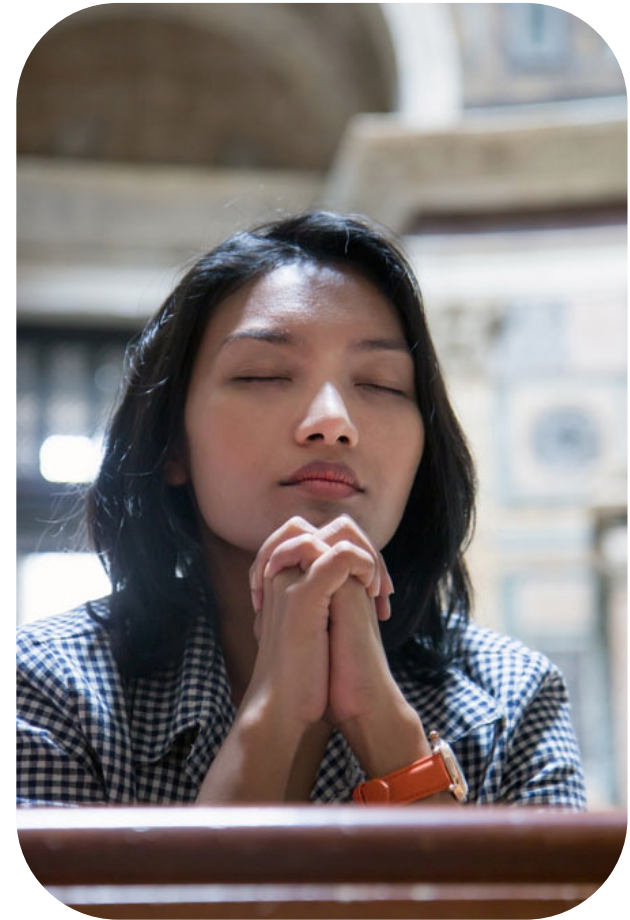
Anglican Church (Episcopal)

1534

Lutheran Church

Adherents

- 80 million worldwide
- 2 million USA



Scripture

- Scripture contains the truth that is necessary for salvation and is the primary norm for faith, but must be interpreted in light of tradition and reason.
- The canon includes 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books.
- The Apocrypha is respected but not viewed as Scripture.

God

- The one Creator and Lord of all, existing eternally as the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).



Jesus

- The eternal Son incarnate
- Fully God and fully man
- Conceived and born of the Virgin Mary
- Died on the cross for our sins
- Rose bodily from the grave
- Ascended into heaven
- Will come again in glory to judge us all



Salvation

- Christ suffered and died as an offering for sin, freeing us from sin and reconciling us to God.
- We share in Christ's victory when in baptism we become living members of the church, believing in him and keeping his commandments.



After Death

- The souls of the faithful are purified as needed to enjoy full communion with God, and at Christ's return they are raised to the fullness of eternal life in heaven.
- Those who reject God face eternal death.

The Church

- The church is the Body of Christ, whose unity is based on the “apostolic succession” of bishops going back to the apostles, of whom the bishop of Rome is one of many.
- It is one, holy, **catholic**, and apostolic.



Canterbury Cathedral

Key Term

CATHOLIC

Literally, “universal”

- (1) *Lowercased.* The faithful church in all its expressions worldwide.
- (2) *Capitalized.* Having to do with the church body headed by the Pope. (The Catholic Church)

The Church

- The Anglican communion is a part of the church, whose unity worldwide is represented by the archbishop of Canterbury.
- The church in the USA is known as the Episcopal Church.



Canterbury Cathedral

Sacraments

- The sacraments are “outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace.”
- Infants and converts are made part of the church in baptism.
- Christ’s body and blood are really present in Communion.

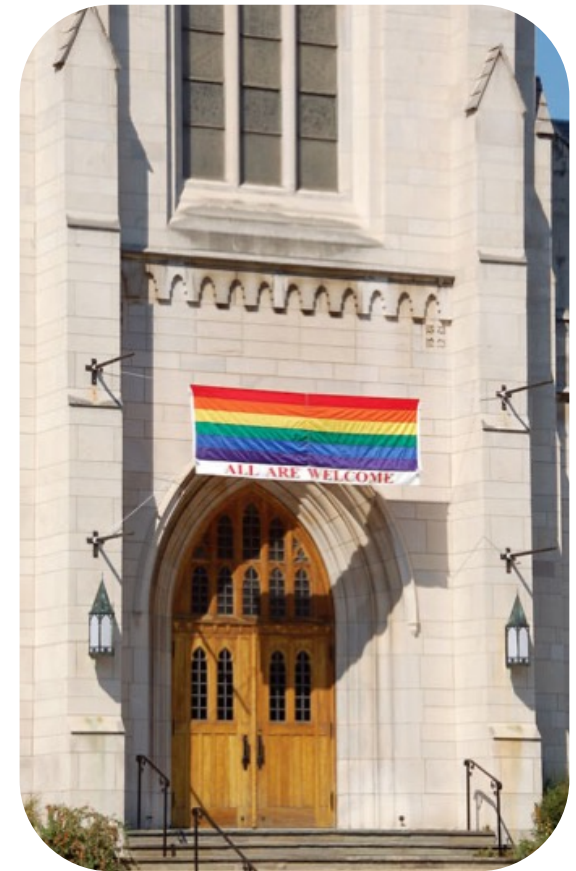
Other Beliefs and Practices

- Members are free to accept or reject the Catholic doctrines of Mary.
- The Book of Common Prayer is the norm for liturgy.
- Priests may marry.



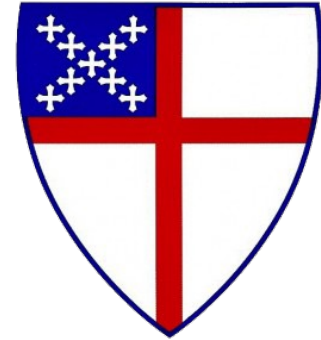
Other Beliefs and Practices

- In 1976 the Episcopal Church approved the ordination of women.
- In 2009 the Episcopal Church approved the ordination of gay bishops and allowed bishops to bless same-sex unions.



Divisions and Trends

- In the USA, most belong to the Episcopal Church.
- The 39 Articles (1571) are the doctrinal basis for conservative splinter groups, such as the Reformed Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church in North America.



Anglican Church in
North America